



# Buzzwords ...

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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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*Buzzwords No 15 December 1989*

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- \* New truck regulations
- \* Diseaseathons
- \* A rose by any other name...



*They were right! Computers do make it much easier to take inventory*

## 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE ...GUESSING

If there ever is a "silly season" for beekeepers, then this late spring - early summer period would probably best fit the bill. This is when more than usual we are trying to "best-guess" our situation as we work towards the production end of the beekeeping year.

Most beekeepers have developed fairly reliable "guesstimate" systems in practical areas such as whether hives have sufficient feed to reach the honey flow intact, or which areas are most likely to produce that honey flow.

However, our best possible guesses are not usually good enough when the final results are in, and early predictions are notoriously unreliable.

For most of us, the estimates and optimism tend to go up and down with the outside temperature, as does our frame of mind often. I am quite sure that many long-suffering spouses think seriously about the attractions of solo-parenthood as their beekeeper partner's mood changes daily with the weather!

As with the daily routine of tending bees, there is a good deal of other guesswork going on around us. Honey buyers are also trying to estimate production figures, as a shortage or an oversupply can radically alter their thinking on a price for the new season.

Exporters are likewise trying to guess the volumes available for overseas markets, particularly of the more attractive lines of honey. And MAF advisers are probably trying to guess how many statements of hive inspection they are going to have to send late reminders out for this year!

There is a more sinister side to all this guesswork, however, and one we definitely cannot afford to overlook. I consider that there are two types of "guesses" - the first is an informed estimate, based upon best available factual information, which I would term a prediction; and the second is one based on hearsay or opinion, which I would term rumour or scuttlebutt.

Unfortunately, the latter can sometimes have a more dramatic effect upon us than the first. By way of example, I recently heard from a supermarket buyer that he'd heard from a colleague, who knew a beekeeper, who had said the industry was in for a bumper crop this year! As a result, the buyer was expecting that the wholesale price for honey would fall again early next year.

Sounds suspiciously like rumour doesn't it, but have that sort of information spread throughout the local retail market, and all the hard work which has gone into dragging honey prices up to a more realistic level this year will be undone very quickly.

Add to that a few weak sellers in the market, and the scene is set for another downslide of prices such as we saw in 1988, and from which we have yet to recover as an industry let alone as individuals.

Part of the remedy is in our own hands of course. Don't base your selling or buying decisions upon rumour - get out and find some sound factual information first. And don't just accept the first information you come across - ask elsewhere and check the answers against each other.

For those of you in a position to have good information - don't be afraid or reluctant to provide it when asked. In the long term you will be judged on the basis of what you say, and accuracy will count in future dealings with the same beekeeper.

Just as important: if you don't know anything, don't say anything!

Having said all that, I would now like to make a few "guesses" of my own about the future, not so much immediate crop prospects but concerning the industry and the NBA.

We are at an interesting stage in the development of beekeeping in this country as we move into the new decade. I believe the 1990s hold a great deal of promise, as long as we can respond to the changes around us.

The past decade has already seen a number of radical changes, the greatest of these being the shift from a honey-based industry to a strong emphasis upon paid pollination, particularly in the North Island.

If we accept scientific predictions about such things as the greenhouse effect, then the next decade might see that influence spread a lot further south than can be imagined at present.

The world honey market has also undergone considerable change, with major new influences such as China and Russia entering the arena with very large volumes and potential. The only defence we can possibly have against this sort of

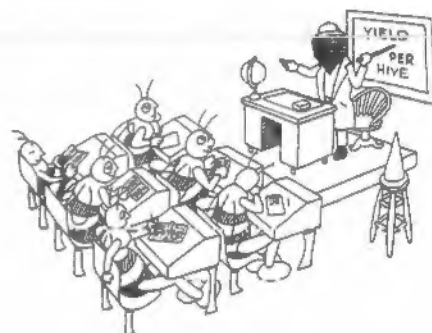
influence is to provide product of a higher quality, and to do so consistently.

I believe we must accept that not all of our honeys are necessarily the "best" as far as the world market is concerned, but we must be prepared to offer the best if we want to be paid accordingly.

We do have a number of unique products to offer to the world but the world needs to be told about them, and I believe the next decade will see a greater effort from the industry in promotion and marketing overseas.

The rapidly developing world communication system is a major factor in improving our chances for access to more diverse world markets, but we must remember that bad news travels as fast as good on the same systems.

We must present a professional front to the world, and this image must be seen at all levels from production to the market: whether that be to a honey buyer, an orchardist, a purchaser of queen bees, or a politician in a decision-making situation.



In this regard, I also believe the NBA will need to play an increasing part in the next decade. We have been forced to become more self-reliant with removal of government assistance in many areas, and this trend seems likely to continue. The ability of our association to respond to these increased demands will depend entirely upon the support it receives from the members of the industry it represents.

As government departments move further away from direct political control, and become increasingly commercially-orientated, then so does the opportunity increase for industries to establish closer links with them to best advantage.

There is a financial cost in doing so of course, but the trained expertise which is available within such departments can be readily utilised to our advantage if we so choose. We should look upon these people as a resource for our industry, rather than the "Big Brother" image which has often prevailed in the past.

Within the industry, I perceive a gradual breaking down of some of the historical animosities which have dominated much of the history of beekeeping over the last 30 years or so. This may be in recognition of the need to unite our efforts to maintain a place in world markets, and to increase our efficiency and skills as beekeepers.

I believe that the process of formalised industry planning over the past six years has done much to promote this

improvement. By means of discussion and collective agreement about the real issues we must tackle, a clearer picture of our direction has emerged.

We have made a strong start in providing the ways and means of achieving the goals and objectives of the industry, but a good deal more remains to be done. We must be prepared to continue with this aspect of NBA activity and devote a worthwhile share of our resources to developing effective management systems in the future.

In closing I would like to make one final prediction, which is this. Those beekeepers who can respond to the worldwide changes taking place, can keep an open mind about all aspects of their business, are willing to co-operate wherever possible with their colleagues and who can accept the need for quality in everything they do, will have every prospect of a bright future in the beekeeping industry.

Time alone will prove whether my guesses are right or wrong. May I wish you all very best wishes for the festive season, and of course a productive beekeeping season.

*Allen McCaw NBA President*

## NEW TRUCK REGULATIONS

What's going on with the new truck laws? A lot of beekeepers seem to be blissfully unaware of what new requirements they have to comply with. Others do know something about the rules but aren't sure how to comply with them or find out more information.

It's up to you to find out about the rules from your nearest MOT office - but the problem is, a lot of staff in those offices don't know the full answers either.

Here's a summary of what you need to know about the new transport law.

If your truck is over 3,500kg laden weight (not tare weight) you now must comply with three requirements: You have to have a certificate of fitness rather than a warrant of fitness; you have to have a driver's log book for each driver (the log book applies to the driver, not the vehicle); and the goods service licence regulations must be met.

The certificate of fitness requirement means that you will have to get a new certificate from a vehicle testing station, before your current warrant of fitness expires. It will be necessary to change the motor vehicle registration classification and obtain a new sticker as well. Both these transactions must be completed before 1 June 1990.

The log book which you have as a driver must be of an approved type. These are available from commercial stationery shops or through the New Zealand Road Transport Association. In any case the book must have on the cover "Approved by the Secretary of Transport".

Regulations for goods service licences are not yet out, but operators have until 31 May 1990 to get one. The application

for a goods service licence includes a police check (ho ho ho), and a fee of course. The fee is \$30 for the licence plus an annual fee of \$10, but you also have to pay \$80 for the MOT to do a police check. Federated Farmers consider this unreasonable (who wouldn't?) and are working on having it removed. The same information is already available to you free under the Official Information Act. All vehicles needing a goods service licence must also carry identification on both the driver's and passenger's windows, giving the location of the vehicle and the operator's name.

Now we come to the touchy part of the whole issue, that of driving hours. The length of time any person can drive a heavy motor vehicle is restricted by law.

In fact these laws are basically not new. With minor changes they have been in place since 1935.

The allowed hours are quite simple:

- \* In any 24-hour period a driver must have a minimum of 10 hours continuous rest.
- \* In any 24-hour period a driver must not drive for more than 11 hours.
- \* In any 24-hour period a driver must not work or be on duty for more than 14 hours.
- \* The maximum continuous period of driving is 5 1/2 hours and the minimum break between such periods is 1/2 an hour.
- \* In any period of 7 days a driver must have a minimum of 24 hours continuous rest.
- \* In any period of 7 days a driver may not work or be on duty for more than 70 hours.

The latest Transport Law Reform Bill made changes to the law that was in place from 1987. Three of these changes that relate to driving hours are:

- 1 Driving no longer includes loading and unloading. It is now essentially "hands on the wheel" time.
- 2 All heavy vehicles over 3500 kg are included in the regulations.
- 3 All passenger service vehicles are also now included.

A word of explanation about duty time. This includes:

- \* Driving, loading or unloading
- \* Waiting for the loading or unloading of the vehicle
- \* Carrying out maintenance, cleaning or other activities in relation to the vehicle
- \* And here's the rub, carrying out any other activities relating to the transport of goods or passengers
- \* Engaging in any paid employment of any kind whether or not it relates to any transport service

Now it's obvious that beekeepers, especially those involved in shifting hives long distances or doing pollination work, cannot work within these restrictions. Federated Farmers have been lobbying on behalf of all farmers (including beekeepers). They have received acceptance in principle from the Minister of Transport to have the existing exemption from log books of within 20 km of home base extended to 50 km from base.

But now the MOT has told us that we beekeepers are not 'farmers' as of right. The Federated Farmers has agreed to take up this part of the case on our behalf. Meanwhile, the NBA executive are putting in a case for an exemption from the log book requirements if beekeepers are within 100 km of their home base.

The MOT made it very clear that there is no way that they will be granting an industry wide exemption from the driving hour and 'on duty' hour requirements. The hour restrictions are not new - it has only been the lack of log books for the smaller vehicles that has made enforcement and prosecution difficult.

Some beekeepers have been gaining exemptions for excess driving hours where beehives are carried over long distances. In this case you just ring the local transport office or a special 7 day a week, 24 hour a day number (04) 859 869 and are given the name of the official to whom any traffic officer should be referred if you are pulled up on the road. There is obviously a lot of confusion out there about what this situation really means, and not all the problems have yet come to light.

The NBA Secretary has been in touch with the milk vendors association, who also have a problem complying with the 24 hours break every 7 days. The milk vendors have applied for an interim exemption making this 12 hours, and as part of this are getting several vendors to keep careful records to use as a basis for future discussions. We might need to do the same for beekeepers if we want an exemption.

In the mean time you should check out your own requirements at your local MOT office. It is better to be safe than sorry and caught up in court proceedings. Remember the old rule that ignorance of the law, no matter complicated it is, is no excuse.

#### Key points to remember are:

You will be required to obtain a goods service license for you and and certificate of fitness for your truck (if it is over 3,500kg laden weight) by June 1990.

You are still required to obey the driving and duty hour restrictions in a 3,500kg vehicle. The major change now is the requirement to keep a log book to confirm your compliance.

The NBA is applying (initially, at least) to the MOT for a 100 km from home base exemption from the **LOG BOOK REQUIREMENTS ONLY**.

We will not be granted an industry wide exemption from the driving and duty hour provisions. However, individual applications can be made for special circumstances such as the long distance hauling of beehives. To make such an application the MOT provides a 7 day 24 hour telephone in Wellington (04) 859 869.

## DISEASATHONS

MAF has co-ordinated several successful disease inspection days with NBA members. The idea of blitzing an area has proved very successful for keeping on top of AFB.

Kerikeri in the north, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Marlborough, Nelson and Alexandra have all had inspection bees this spring.

The inspections are mostly targeted to areas or beekeepers where AFB is likely to be found. There's also an element of widespread surveillance - almost random inspections - to see what's happening over a bigger area. So if your hives were looked at you needn't feel picked on.

Beekeepers have enjoyed being part of these inspection days, to see what beekeeping's like on the other side of the hobbyist/commercial divide.

Commercial beekeepers have generally been surprised to see how very little AFB can be found in hobbyist operations even though these range from the smartest hives around to ones of the crowbar variety.

Hobbyist beekeepers are impressed that full-timers have given up a day to go inspecting. Domestic beekeepers in the teams usually get a shock at the standard of many commercial apiaries.

Everyone involved learns something of the frustrations of having to locate apiaries using the scant information supplied by beekeepers. There'll be a lot better information put on Statements of Inspection this year, and ID numbers on hives.

*MAF apiculture unit*

## WORLD HONEY MARKET

Canada and the US have given us some startling information about the prospects for honey trade in the next season. In Canada honey prices have risen over 25% in the past 2 months, and are approximately \$C1.37 kg c&f Europe for clover honey. The total Canadian honey crop has been officially put at 28,000 tonnes, 10,000 below normal. This is thought to be still too optimistic, and most predictions suggest that the crop will be 2-4,000 tonnes below this estimate. Now here's the exciting news - with domestic consumption near 25,000 tonnes, and a good portion of the crop committed to export at the beginning of the season, Canada will need to import honey.

The shortage of honey has resulted from some very poor producing conditions in the main honey regions. In the western provinces record low soil moisture was experienced until the rains finally arrived in May or June. This allowed nectar sources to progress very well, but the rain stopped again in July which is the critical month for flowering. Crops had to reach down for sub-soil moisture but there was none. Rape blossoms died off just at the time when they should have been yielding nectar. Heavy late-August rains restricted bees to hives and any hopes of late clover flows were lost.



Honey prices have stabilised in recent weeks because of a stand-off with buyers waiting for prices to drop and sellers waiting for prices to rise. Many beekeepers are also waiting for beekeeper association conventions to take place in order to gauge what should be happening in the market. Other beekeepers are waiting to sell in January because of tax advantages.

The US honey crop for 1989 is estimated at 70,000 tonnes. As of 1 September only 15,000 tonnes of the 1988 crop were still available. This means the US will need to import 55,000 - 65,000 tonnes this year. Most packers have purchased as much domestic honey as they can get their hands on, and are covered until about January 1990. After that the balance of the year will have to be covered by imports.

Buyers in North America suggest that because of the huge increase in imports needed by the US, exporters should maintain their price levels until the buyers in the US are prepared to accept the new prices. Domestic stock will not last indefinitely.

Many countries are selling white honey at \$US950 - \$1,000/tonne c&f Europe, or at an exchange rate of 0.59, NZ\$1,610 - \$1,695 per tonne.



## MARKET REPORT

Bulk honey stocks are low.

**Bulk honey prices:** Export volume low, price improving. Local bulk sales have been steady and occurring above NZ\$2.00 plus GST freight paid by buyer and drums returned.

At the NBA executive meeting on 13 December it was recommended that \$2.00 + GST, freight and drums will be a base price for the coming season.

Specialty honeys are selling well for good quality.

**Prices for packed honey:** Prices of retail packs have increased over the last few months and are continuing to do so. Most packers have a wholesale price of \$1.80 - \$1.85 per 500g at present "top of the range" price.

**Price prospect for the new season:** Enquiries from overseas indicate an increased interest, which is expected to result in improving prices.

**Contract extracting:** Last year contract extracting prices were from \$2.00 - \$2.75 per super for lots of over 200 supers. Small lots under 200 supers cost a lot more.

**Beehive prices:** Prices for beehives have increased over the last few months for good gear and locations.

*Keith Herron for the NBA marketing committee*

## WORLD FOOD FAIR

Pure, unpolluted food was the theme of this year's world food fair in Cologne, West Germany.

Mike Moore plugged our country's "ideal conditions of climate, environment and hygiene standards in a land unspoiled by any form of pollution". (Well, maybe a little artistic licence is okay when you're in a country besieged by acid rain and nuclear fallout).

The West German chancellor opened the fair and stressed the importance of "the safety and harmlessness of food". Many countries and exporters were climbing on the fresh and green bandwagon.

Airborne Honey promoted organic honey and received enquiries for individual orders worth over \$100,000.

November's *Hospitality* magazine says that the results of the food fair tell us "there is no doubt that we are on a roll, provided we remain aware that decisions like food irradiation plants; availability of lead-free fuel; and control of ozone-damaging CFCs may all ultimately affect the image of New Zealand as far and away the finest".

Veronica from Airborne Honey tells me that they took videos by Henrik Moller on beech honeydew to the fair, and received a very good response from buyers. There was also a lot of interest in Waikato University's work on antibacterial honeys.

## CAN YOU HELP?

Veronica would like to get a copy of the Top Half TV programme on 26 October, which featured about five minutes on Waikato University's research into antibacterial honey. If you can help her to obtain a copy, please contact Airborne Honey on (03) 243 569.

**Urgent!** Please help Waikato University to keep going with their research on honey. They desperately need samples of single-source honey (particularly manuka), and are even prepared to pay for it.

I can't believe that every beekeeper in the country is too lazy to sell honey to a research programme that is going to boost overseas sales.

Remember to get the sample as pure as possible. Scrape it from a comb, avoiding cells of pollen. Manuka and kanuka are especially desirable, in lots of 2-6kg.

Send the samples to:

Dr Peter Molan  
Biochemistry Department  
University of Waikato  
Private Bag  
Hamilton

*MAF apiculture unit*

## FAX DIRECTORY

Looks like only a few beekeepers have caught up with 1980s telecommunications, if the response to our fax directory request is anything to go by.

Airborne Honey	(03) 243 236
Arataki Honey (Waiotapu)	(073) 480 777
Ecroyd, Stuart (Bee Supplies)	(03) 587 513
Franklin, Ken (Te Kauwhata)	(0817) 63 704
Herron, Keith (Greenvale Apiaries)	(020) 22 738
McCaw, Allen (NBA President)	(03417) 7198
Smith, V L & Son (Alliance Woodware)	(0513) 6244
Telford Farm Training Institute	(0341) 83584
Waikato Honey Products (Bryan Clements)	(07) 871 4709
Wallingford, Nick (BOP Polytechnic)	(075) 442 386

## SOUTHLAND FIELD DAY

This great event is coming up again. Mark your diary for Saturday 3 February 1990, and head off to Telford Farm Training Institute on that day.

The programme looks good: demonstrations of requeening and disease recognition; talks on royal jelly production, NBA affairs; and an introduction to Telford's unit. There's also displays and guided tours, a buy/sell/exchange, and BBQ in the evening. Tennis court and gym facilities are available.

BYO lunch and bee veil, and \$5 per adult. You can also use Telford's accommodation and dining facilities if you book before 31 January with Jill Haig at (0341) 81 500.



## RINGING HOME

Telecom has introduced a new service that allows you to dial straight through to the New Zealand Telecom operator from any one of the following countries: Japan, Hong Kong, USA, Australia, Canada, UK and Singapore. You can call New Zealand collect from almost any phone in the street, restaurant, airport, or from friends. If you are staying in a hotel you will minimise the charges that they make for using the phone. It's obviously also very useful in emergencies.

In Australia, ring 0014881640; in USA 1-800-248-0064 and from Canada 1-800-6630684. A small card is available from Telecom listing all the numbers.

## LYNFIELD LAB

Brian Milnes at MAF's Lynfield office will be away from 14 December to about 2 February. Alternative services are available from:

- **Export honey certification** Derek Bettsworth, MAF Whangarei  
Murray Reid, MAF Hamilton
- **Bee disease diagnosis** Helen Murray  
DSIR Mt Albert  
Auckland  
Phone (09) 893 660 x6903

After 2 February MAF Lynfield's usual range of services will be available. These include:

- Queen bee quality assessment.
- Honey analysis (Codex alimentarius).
- Honey propolis and royal jelly analysis (vitamins, minerals and amino acids).
- Bee disease diagnosis.

## MISS BUMBY

As this year draws to a close we are also leaving behind the 150th anniversary of Mary Bumby bringing the first honey bees to New Zealand.

Mary Bumby will be remembered by the addition of a painting or photograph of her to be placed in the Mangungu mission house, where it all started. This has been arranged by the NBA executive and the Historic Places Trust.

Now you can all have a piece of history in your own gardens. Ken Nobbs, still a keen gardener at 80 years young and a life member of "Friends of the Trees", has bred a special rose and called it Mary Anna Bumby after the lady in question. This breed is a miniature white thornless and scented rose with a long flowering life.

*Buzzwords* readers can buy this rose plant for \$8 from Ken Nobbs at 5 Homestead Rse, Aparangi, Te Kauwhata. Phone (0817) 63 789.

## BUZZWORDS IS ...

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